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**Title:**

Speech opening Fourth Convocation of the Royal Australian College of Dental Surgeons,  
Bonython Hall

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SPEECH BY THE PREMIER, MR DUNSTAN, OPENING FOURTH CONVOCATION OF  
THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF DENTAL SURGEONS.

BONYTHON HALL. 3.3.74

Dr Lavis, Mr Vice Chancellor, My Ministerial Colleagues,  
My Lord Mayor, Mr President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you very much for inviting me here this evening to open your  
fourth Convocation.

I was particularly pleased that you chose Adelaide as the first  
venue outside Canberra or Sydney for this national occasion.

You could not have picked a better time since - as you noted

Dr Lavis - it coincides with the centenary of this University.

I hope that your visitors, having been suitably impressed with our  
academic attainment, will stay on to appreciate our artistic  
accomplishments at the Arts Festival. We are - with cause - very  
proud of both institutions.

The encouragement and maintenance of the highest standards is  
perhaps the most solemn responsibility on any representative  
professional body.

It is important in any field. It is vital in that of health services.

Australia is well served in this direction and in the past nine  
years it has <sup>been</sup> especially well served in the field of dentistry by  
your College.

A proper supply of people with post-graduate training is as  
important in dentistry as it is in medicine.

In South Australia we have, for some years now, been anxious to  
improve dental services in the widest possible manner.

And - happily with the support of the Commonwealth Government -  
we are having considerable success.

Another step forward was taken this week. Our School Dental  
Services have now been upgraded into a new Dental Health Branch,  
a division of the Department of Public Health.

It is an administrative change but it is an important one as it  
opens the way for the broadening of dental services into the public  
health field generally rather than confining them to the schools.

There has also been a similar upgrading with the teaching  
services provided by the Dental Hospital following the appointment  
of a Director of Restorative Dentistry and a Director of Orthodontics.

In this we share the aims of the College in seeking not only to  
widen services but also to provide for greater specialisation.

This audience will be keenly conscious of the need for more  
widespread dental preventive medicine in our general public  
health services.

Within the schools themselves we are continuing to expand our services through the Commonwealth health scheme which has as one of its goals free dental care for all children by 1980.

Nine of our primary schools shared the recent Federal Grant of \$551,000. This covers the cost of clinics in three country and two metropolitan <sup>centres</sup> ~~schools~~. These are at Berri, Taillem Bend, two at Whyalla, and at Port Adelaide and Mansfield Park. Three more are to be established at Bordertown, Morphett Vale and Elizabeth Field by February 1975.

School services are also being expanded through the training of additional therapists at the Somerton Park Training Centre. This is a project costing more than \$840,000 and will enable us to increase the number of students from 16 a year to 96 and the number of primary children visiting the centre to 6,500.

This has imposed a heavy financial burden on the State - even with the generous Commonwealth support but it is one we willingly accept. The expanded services are improving the health of our children and the effects of these decisions will be apparent for years to come. It will, in a sense, deprive your members of numbers of patients - a sacrifice that I know will gladly be made. I appreciate, of course, that the services I have been talking about will be of great interest to members of this College but that, as specialists, you will not be directly involved. However, the need to widen the spectrum of dental services has been evident for a long time and, indeed, members of this College have been in the forefront in pointing this out and in working to achieve it.

I want to acknowledge, too, the debt that we owe to the College. South Australian dental graduates have a justly high reputation thanks to the teaching facilities and staff which we have here. I don't wish to anticipate any decision of your College but I think I may be justified in expressing the hope that we may soon see further development in the qualifications offered within the State. The constitution and objectives of your College are similar to those organisations which have given such valuable service in the United Kingdom.

Its worth to Australia has been shown already and I'm sure it will render still greater service in the future. I have very much pleasure in declaring the Convocation open.

Thank you.